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**Montana Department of Commerce Awards \$293,000 in  
Funding to the Town of Westby & New Century Ag**

(HELENA) – The Montana Department of Commerce has awarded a combined total of \$293,000 to the Town of Westby and New Century Ag, to support infrastructure improvements and workforce training related to the expansion of New Century Ag facility.

Commerce has awarded the Town of Westby \$243,000 in funding, from the Community Development Block Grant - Economic Development (CDBG-ED) program and \$25,000 from the Big Sky Trust Fund. The funding will be used to assist with the cost of road improvements and water and sewer extensions to New Century Ag as it completes construction on a new office space, and a new grain elevator.

The Department has also awarded New Century Ag \$25,000 in funding from the Workforce Innovation in Regional Development (WIRED) program. The award will be used for worker training associated with the facility's new grain elevator.

“Retention of the grain elevator in Westby is a crucial factor in maintaining businesses and local economies in eastern Montana,” said Governor Brian Schweitzer. “I am committed to supporting projects that support industry in our eastern communities.”

“New jobs and an improved facility will mean great things for New Century Ag and the people of Westby,” said Anthony Preite, Director of the Montana Department of Commerce. “We’re proud to help keep local economies moving.”

The awards must be used to create a minimum of five new jobs for low to moderate income workers. Great Northern Development will assist with the administration of the project.

The CDBG-ED program includes support from the Community Development Block Grant program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Economic Development Administration.

In January 2006, the U.S. Department of Labor approved Governor Schweitzer’s application for the WIRED initiative. Montana’s application was one of only 13 approved nationwide. Montana’s WIRED proposal focused on the development of the bio-product industry in 32 counties and six Indian reservations of Central and Eastern Montana. The Montana Department of Commerce is managing a grant program under contract with the Montana Department of Labor and Industry to implement part of the WIRED proposal.

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